

# THE WELL-READ LIBRARIAN: EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION OF ONLINE HEALTH RESOURCES

by Marissa Priddis



## *Deciphering Medspeak.*

<http://www.mlanet.org/resources/medspeak/index.html>

This site, created by the Medical Library Association, seeks to help patients interpret common “medspeak” into easily understood terms. Also includes a list of common medical “shorthand” found in doctor notes or on prescriptions.

Detlefsen, Ellen Gay. “Where Am I to Go? Use of the Internet for Consumer Health Information by Two Vulnerable Communities.” *Library Trends*. 53, no.2 (2004): 283-301.

This article seeks to review research literature on the information seeking actions during “the use of the Internet by the elderly and by African Americans.” The article includes tips on evaluating online health information, as well as consumer health web sites that are geared towards these two specific populations.

## *Finding Reliable Health Information Online.*

<http://www.genome.gov/11008303>

The National Human Genome Research Institute outlines some of the background and terminology of medical research – such as the difference between review articles and case reports. Also provides links to a number of trusted online resources and databases for finding medical information.

## *How to Find Medical Information.*

<http://www.niams.nih.gov/hi/topics/howto/howto.htm>

The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases has created this site to advise patients as to where to find online medical information, some trusted resources, and tips are how to find reliable or useful sites online.

## *Medi-Lexicon.*

<http://www.medilexicon.com/>

This searchable site (created by Pharma-Lexicon International in the UK) has over 200,000 medical abbreviations indexed. Abbreviations link to pertinent articles on PubMed, hosted by the National Library of Medicine.

## *MedlinePlus Guide to Healthy Web Surfing.*

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthywebsurfing.html>

This site, created by MedlinePlus, provides a bulleted list (geared for patients or online searchers) for “evaluating the quality of health information on Web sites”. Topics include currency, bias, privacy and evidence.

Pace, Brian. “Medical Research – Finding the Best Information.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 284 (2000): 1336.

This JAMA “patient page” describes the elements involved in clinical trials as well as common types of research used in the medical field so that patients have a better understanding of medical research cited online.

## *Simple Test Rates Accuracy Of Cancer-Related Web Sites.*

[http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS\\_2\\_1x\\_Simple\\_Test\\_Rates\\_Accuracy\\_Of\\_Cancer-Related\\_Web\\_Sites.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/NWS/content/NWS_2_1x_Simple_Test_Rates_Accuracy_Of_Cancer-Related_Web_Sites.asp)

This American Cancer Society news article details ways for patients searching online for unconventional therapies to avoid poor medical information. The study cited was originally detailed in the article: “The Internet for Medical Information About Cancer: Help or Hindrance?” (*Psychosomatics*, 44 (2003):100-103).

## *10 Things To Know About Evaluating Medical Resources on the Web.*

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/webresources/>

This site, from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, provides straightforward answers about evaluating health websites for content and accuracy. The guidelines discussed also pertain to any evaluation of a website, whether for health or for unrelated information.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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